

"I am greatly grieved. But the offence you have committed is a serious one, the majesty of the law has been outraged, by the theft of apples, and if it were to go unpunished, murder and rapine might arise in this happy land, and therefore, the sentence of the court is that you have a dozen strokes with the birch rod, and six months imprisonment." "Oh my," said the culprit.

Coleridge began in the same way. "I had behaved so well that day, and had shown marks of considerable education, and force of character, but the offence I had committed was a serious one. Supposing some hot headed man had taken my words seriously, and put them into execution, I should have been morally guilty of murder." He had hesitated as to what sentence he should pronounce. He could send me to penal servitude, but he would not, but under the circumstances he should pass the severe sentence of eighteen months hard labour.

"How long did you expect to get," said a newspaper reporter, when I came out of prison "Six months." "I thought you would have got three," was the reply.

I turned with a smile from the court, and was hurried down the stairs to the cells below. A woman waved her handkerchief from the gallery, a man cried "God bless you," and that was all. It was the answer of the people to the sentence of the court.

—NOTICE.—

Owing to pressure on our space, reports of Walsall Amnesty Meeting will appear in next issue.

In next Number of the "Commonweal," will appear

STANLEY ^{AND} RHODES,
"PILLAGE AND MURDER IN AFRICA."

WILL APPEAR SHORTLY

"THE SWEATING DENS OF SHEFFIELD"
DISEASE ^{AND} DEATH
AMONG THE GRINDERS.
HORRIBLE REVELATIONS!

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Prosecuted by Government.

THE
COMMONWEAL

Vol. I.—No. 1.

MAY 6th, 1892.

One Penny.

A PEEP INTO NEWGATE.
MOWBRAY & NICOLL,
At the OLD BAILEY.
Awful Police Perjury.
Our Editor in Jail.
THE HORRORS OF PRISON LIFE.

ONE PENNY.

TO OUR READERS.

"The Anarchist" has lived two years, through many struggles and difficulties, and we now intend to revive the past glories of the oldest revolutionary paper in England.

"The Commonweal," founded by William Morris, in January, 1886, and which died in September, 1892, was never a purely Anarchist paper. It was the organ of International Revolutionary Socialism; and it united under its flag not only Anarchists, but also those Revolutionary Socialists who, having discovered the fraud of politics, declined to be humbugged any longer, and declared the emancipation of the people could only be obtained by the people themselves, by their own direct revolutionary action. Our "Commonweal" will take the same course; we welcome all, whatever their views may be as to majority rule, etc. So long as they refuse to vote or be voted for, and will unite with us for the complete abolition of the present system of society. All men who detest the State, who see that no good can come from Parliamentary action, are really Anarchists, no matter what they may call themselves. Names are of no consequence, it is ideas that are the important point. Throughout all Socialist parties there are many men who have had enough of politics and politicians, and it is these that may be won to the only cause worth fighting for the cause of International Revolutionary Socialism.

A word as to methods; How is the free community, owning land, capital, and the means of production, to be won? Not of necessity by bloodshed or violence. Passive resistance, which in England and Ireland has done so much, may yet do more. An Anti-Rent Campaign in London shuns would do more than any amount of parliamentary and municipal elections to win men to Socialism. A General Strike, or a Great Lock-Out, such as is now impending in the colliery districts, will win thousands of converts to the new ideas, if used by all Socialist bodies for propaganda.

We desire to be on peaceable terms with all men. We shall not abuse people because they believe in State or Parliament, but try to win them to a more excellent way by reasonable discussion and argument.

The "Commonweal" will, in each number, contain a complete pamphlet, dealing not only with historic revolts of the workers, but also with the suffering and sweating, so common among the people to day. There will also be articles by the best known Continental and English Anarchists and Socialists on educational subjects. The "Commonweal" will be a labour paper, not written in an academic style for students, but explaining in a plain and simple way for working people, the truths of Anarchist and Revolutionary Socialism.

In taking the name of a paper, crushed out of existence by police persecution, we avow our intention of continuing the fight against tyranny and monopoly with more vigour and determination than ever.

THE COMMONWEAL.

Vol. 1--No. 1.

MAY, 1896.

One Penny.

A PEEP INTO NEWGATE.

CHAPTER IV.

A BRUTAL MAGISTRATE.

"THE RAID ON THE COMMONWEAL"—MEDICINE FOR MELVILLE—ANDERSON'S ORDERS—MOWBRAY'S ARREST—THE DEAD WIFE—WHAT ARE THESE CHILDREN TO DO?—MAGISTRATE VAUGHAN—"IN THE CUSTODY OF A POLICEMAN"—PUBLIC INDIGNATION—POLICE PERJURY—COMMITTED FOR TRIAL.

It was at half-past three, on Tuesday, April 19th, that the office of the *Commonweal* was raided by Melville and his gang. They completely ransacked the place, carrying off type, papers, and leaflets. They were assiduous in their inquiries as to a certain book on explosives, which Conlon had been getting out but which had never been printed. If they could only have found a few copies what valuable evidence it would have been. Tom Cantwell told them in jest, "We have been expecting you for some time, and do you think we should be fools, as to keep anything here likely to get men into trouble."

Melville is a judge of explosives; he got hold of a medicine bottle, it was nearly empty, but there was a little transparent fluid at the bottom. There was no label on the bottle, and it might be nitric acid. As Tom acknowledged it was his property, he had been taking medicine, they had serious thoughts of him along with the type. But after careful examination of the fluid, they thought it best to leave him alone. Finally they departed with a threat, "That they would take the whole bloody lot next time."

Our friends had great difficulty in getting the type back. Says the *Commonweal* of June 25th, 1892, "We have got our type back at last, but not without considerable trouble, but if the authorities have caused loss of time, to some of our comrades, we have the satisfaction of knowing that we worried them. After repeated applications at Scotland Yard and Bow Street, Sweeny (the per-jurer in Nicoll's case) called at our office, last Saturday, and informed us that

"we were to call at Scotland Yard on Monday, at twelve o'clock. We were humbugged for about six hours, while the circumlocutionary arrangements were put in motion, and it was finally delivered to Cantwell and Parker, the former as Trustee, and the latter as the Secretary of the London Socialist League. When our Comrades reached the room in which the type was locked up, they had to break it up, to 'pye it,' as printers call it, for Anderson, the Assistant Commissioner, had given orders to that effect, to prevent its being reprinted. Now there was not the least excuse for this wanton piece of destruction, as the "incriminating" article for which Nicoll was prosecuted, was not in the number seized on April 19th, nor was there anything strong on the nine galleys of matter that was also taken. The type was taken away in bank bags, provided by the police. However, they still retained the stereotypes of the Carmagnole, and a quantity of Malatesta's dialogue, which Anderson considers seditions. Our friends of the Freedom Group had better look out for a prosecution." Why was Anderson, Melville's chief, so anxious to prevent the "nine galleys of type" from being "reprinted"? There was "nothing strong" there, except "The Truth about the Walsall Plot." But it is well to suppress awkward revelations. It was done effectually.

The arrest of Mowbray was so cruel, that it even unmanned the detectives, Littlechild and McIntyre, who executed it. Melville, like Chevy Slyme, was round the corner while the dirty work was done. Mowbray's wife had only died four hours before, and he was sitting down to a scanty meal with his little children, when the detectives entered and seized him. "This is a bad job," said Mowbray, "my wife is just dead, and what are these children to do?" and he burst into tears.

It was vain for him to declare that he did not agree with the article. That he had never seen it till the *Commonweal* was published, and that he had then severed all connection with the paper. All these statements were quite true, but it made no difference. The law must be obeyed. He was dragged away from his desolate home, and his little ones were left without father or mother. Littlechild and McIntyre had done some unpleasant work in their time, but this was a little too much even for them.

I am not fond of detectives, but I must admit that both showed considerable sympathy in giving their evidence at the hearing at Bow Street on Wednesday. I am not altogether sure that McIntyre was not sacked from the force for being too "sympathetic." Detectives have no right to sympathise with Anarchists. They must have hearts of stone and be as cruel as the grave.

But if Detectives McIntyre and Littlechild were not up to their work, there was a gentleman on the magisterial bench who could arise to the height of the occasion.

Mr. Vaughan, after the detectives had given their evidence, was asked by Mowbray if he would allow him out on bail to bury his dead wife. Before Vaughan could reply I interposed. I said, "Mowbray has had nothing to do with the writing of the article, or its publication. I wrote the article, and published it, and I alone am responsible." "Who is the publisher of the paper?" said Vaughan to Cliffe, the Solicitor to the Treasury. "Mowbray," said Cliffe. "Very well," said Vaughan, and turning to Mowbray he added, "You may attend your wife's funeral in the custody of a policeman!" A more cruel and brutal sentence has never been heard from the magisterial bench. What of the law and the civilization, that breeds such monsters as these?

There was a murmur of indignation in the Court, and as we left the dock, there were loud cries of "cheer up." We were remanded for a week, all bail refused, and were soon on our way, in the prison van, to Holloway.

But Vaughan's brutality was too much even for the capitalistic press. There was a general outburst of popular indignation. Mrs. Besant telegraphed to Mowbray that she would take care of the children, and the storm grew so strong that Vaughan was forced to let Mowbray out on bail. On Saturday, April 23rd, the day the funeral took place, the Commercial Road was thronged by sympathetic working people, and the sad procession passed on its way to Manor Park Cemetery, amid the respectful silence of the masses. It was an excellent object lesson to the people of the iniquity and cruelty of the officials of the law.

It is not that men like Vaughan and Melville are naturally hard hearted scoundrels. It is their occupation that has made them so. The law creates these monsters, its faithful servants. A man cannot always be engaged in hunting down people like wild beasts, or in passing savage sentences upon starving wretches without becoming brutalized. It is only natural. The occupation makes the man.

We were soon to hear another illustration of the virtues of the gentlemen who look after our morals. At the second hearing of our case, on Wednesday, April 27th, the Counsel for the Crown, Mr. Avory, stated that it would be proved, by two "unimpeachable witnesses," that I had repeated the "incitement to murder" in Hyde Park. Whereupon detectives Sweeney and Powell stepped into the box and delivered "an horrible tale." They were in Hyde Park at the demonstration, on Sunday, April 10th, when they heard me make the following statement: "Four men are responsible for the conviction of the Walsall Comrades, 'Butcher Hawkins, Melville, Matthews, and Coulon. Within a fortnight two of them must die. What must our comrades feel when they meet Butcher Hawkins, or Hangman Hawkins as he is better known, in the street.' Now

there can be no question that this is an "incitement to murder." There is some doubt about the *Commonweal* article, but none about this. But there was only one objection to its being received as evidence. *It was absolutely false from beginning to end.* I had never incited to murder in Hyde Park. I had never used the words which were sworn to by these veracious officers. What induced these men to commit deliberate perjury? The case was not too strong against me. It was necessary to strengthen it. You can get a long term of penal servitude for incitement to murder. It would have suited Melville admirably to have had me sent away for five or ten years. I should have told no more "lies" about him. Melville knew, all Scotland Yard knew, that this evidence was absolutely false. They must have known, for our meeting swarmed with detectives. But you see when the honour of one of their superiors is at stake, there is nothing his subordinates will not do to oblige him. and what is a little perjury, more or less. It is done every day in the force in trifling matters, and why should it not be done when an enemy of law and order is concerned. The police must uphold at all hazards the dignity of law. And the lies of advocates, lawyers, legislators, and policemen, are part of its administration. If Jesus Christ stood in the dock to day, there would be no lack of false witnesses to testify against him. In Jerusalem they had to get them from the vilest of the people. We have plenty in the police force here. This is one of the blessings of civilization. "Ah, sir, old Ananias isn't in it with a policeman," said a burly bus driver to me one day, but magistrates always believe them. In spite of my indignant protests, Vaughan committed me for trial at the Old Bailey, not only for the *Commonweal* article, but for the speech in Hyde Park.

When I arrived at my cell in Holloway, my jailor asked me, "How I had got on." "Committed to the Central Criminal Court," I replied. "Ah, next Monday," he said. "Well you won't have long to wait."

CHAPTER V.

POVERTY AND CRIME.

INNOCENT BEFORE LAW—A LIGHT SUPPER—PRISON LITERATURE—SHAKESPEARE
—CHAPEL—BRUTALITY OF WARDERS—PIOUS PRISONERS—THE WILD
BEASTS CAGE—POVERTY AND DEPAIR—THE PREY OF THE POLICE—THE
MAN FROM WANDSWORTH.

Life in jail for a prisoner awaiting trial is as brutal as the life of the convicted prisoner. If you have money and will spend it, you may be fairly comfortable. But the prisoner without means is not so fortunate. He might as well be convicted, the routine is just the same.

You rise at six, roll up your bedding, and clean up your cell, breakfast at eight. Brown bread and skilly; you are provided with less food than a prisoner serving the first four months of a long sentence, and that is a starvation diet. After breakfast you go to chapel, then to exercise in the prison yard. If your friends call, you may receive a visit. Dinner at twelve, and then you have the whole afternoon for meditation, till after a light supper of six ounces of bread and a pint of skilly, you go to bed at eight p.m.

But there is no oakum, an old hand sometimes wishes there was, it would be more amusing. "Would you rather be serving your sentence, or waiting for 'it in jail?'" I asked a prisoner once. "I would rather be doing time," he replied. "You know what you've got, and there is work to do. Time passes quickly. There ain't that suspense." Suspense is the torture of the unconvicted prisoner, and all will admit that it is not the sentence, but waiting for the sentence, that is the worst. The ten days I passed in Holloway before my removal to Newgate for my trial, seemed like a century.

There is so little to vary the monotony. The criminal is rarely a man who reads, but if he was fond of reading, he would not find much to amuse him in the prison library. Religious tracts; elementary books on science, adapted to the comprehension of children; boys books of adventure, with moral and religious reflections, by the late Mr. Ballantine; the story of the good little boy who died early. What a blessing to his parents. And all the nauseous trash that does duty as religious literature. This stuff is calculated to bring on incipient brain softening, and certainly does not lighten the monotonous torture of solitary confinement.

When in prison I quite startled the warder who acted as librarian, by asking for "Shakespeare." "Shakespeare!" he said, "Have you ever been in jail before?" I remarked, with humility, that "I had not."

"Ah," he said, with an air of pity for my inexperience, "if you you had, you would know that we don't keep books like that here." He gave me the "Child's Guide to Heaven," instead.

But prison life is not without its pleasures. Firstly, there is "Chapel." Seated in your cell, you hear a prodigious banging of doors, mingled with hoarse cries of "Chapel! Chapel!" the door is flung open, and you march out. If you are new to prison, you put your hat on, if you do it will be taken from your head and flung on the floor, and a rush of warders will drive you to Divine Service like a herd of frightened cattle.

A certain amount of ruffianism is needed for beginners in crime. The jailor who usually presides at the reception room at Holloway is an adept at

this. He will bully you like a dog or a pick-pocket, although in the eyes of the law you are quite innocent, yet it is well to give you a taste of what you may expect later.

When Mowbray and I first arrived at Holloway, this estimable functionary presided over the ceremony of our incarceration. He asked our names and ages. "What religion?" "None." "What are you then?" with a savage growl, and a look, meaning "You dogs." "Anarchists?" "Yes." A grunt of dissatisfaction, meaning "You ought to be hung." The jailers cannot understand a prisoner without a religion. Most criminals belong to the Church of England. A Dissenter is rare, but Atheists are very scarce. All the people who commit theft, robbery, rape, and murder, belong to the Established Church, but then the greater the Saint the greater the sinner.

The piety of the prisoners in Chapel is quite delightful. They evidently know their prayer book by heart, and the earnest way in which they gave the responses would delight a bishop. Occasionally, amid the din of voices, you would hear fragments of conversation which were not pious. "Say Bill, what are you lagged for?" "Burglary." "O Lord, we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost mutton."

"What have you been doing to your hands, Bill? What, been at work?" "O Christ, save us! Lord, have mercy upon us."

"Well, they asked me, and I thought I could oblige them. And the Catholic faith is this, 'Why, you bloody fool, you don't catch me working unless I am forced to.' Then we sung a hymn--

This is the place, O Lord, wherin Thy honour dwells,
The joy of Thine abode, all earthly joys excells.
This is Thine house of prayer, wherein Thy servants meet,
And Thon, O Lord, art there, Thy chosen flock to greet.

The Lord's chosen flock are sometimes a peculiar people. Though most of the thieves assembled there were quite as honest as the fashionable congregations in West End churches. But great thieves ride in their carriages, while small thieves go to jail. It is the way of the world.

Not only do we enjoy the consolations of religion in prison, but we are also allowed the inestimable privilege of seeing our friends.

At Holloway, a batch of prisoners are marched down in single file, to a series of little boxes like those at pawnbrokers. You enter a box, the door is closed behind you, in front, above what would be the counter at pawnbrokers, is a lattice work of iron bars, on the other side are some more bars through which you see the face of a friend. Between you is a corridor where a warder

walks up and down. You exchange greetings through the bars of this wild beast cage, when immediately there arises on every side of you an inarticulate din. The prisoners are all talking to their friends at once, and as there is some distance between them, it is necessary to talk very loud. But the louder you talk the louder are your neighbours, till at last their voices rise into shrieks, and you must shout your loudest to be heard. It is a pleasure for the wife or relations of an innocent prisoner to visit him in prison. Many prisoners ask their wives not to come, these visits are cruel, so agonising. To see the face of one you love behind iron bars and find it almost impossible for your voice to reach him, it is worse than waiting in silence for the verdict. But what of the other prisoners? When you are in prison awaiting trial, you have a better opportunity of forming an opinion as to their social condition than when they have assumed the garb of a convicted criminal. In prison dress all men are equal. It is evident what has brought them to jail--Poverty! There is scarcely one who is decently clothed, if they are not actually in rags, they have that air of shabby gentility, that speaks more eloquently of a sharp struggle against the demon of hunger. A well dressed man is rare, and if you see one, he belongs as a rule not to the criminal class. He is a clerk, or some solicitor, who has committed a breach of trust, or a swindling capitalist or financier. I remember the hum of admiration which arose amid a crowd of hungry looking criminals as a gold watch was handed to a stout well dressed individual who was leaving Holloway to take his trial. This wealth aroused envy.

It is at exercise that you see your fellow prisoners, and you can also contemplate the pleasant countenances of all the detectives and warders in London. Two or three times a week these gentlemen come round to survey their natural prey for the purpose of identification. The prisoners are formed in a long line while the officials march round and inspect them, note book in hand.

This is an excellent device for enabling detectives to know criminals, but it also enables the criminals to identify detectives, which is a useful accomplishment.

Personal compliments pass on these occasions. For instance, a warder from Wandsworth, a small, sharp, red nosed, cold blooded individual, made himself very prominent in booking them down. This roused the ire of a man, who had been booked, and he exclaimed in great wrath "Why you bloody little-----" "from Wandsworth, Why don't yer prick that nose of yours and let some of the----villany out?" There was a general laugh, but from the expression on the face of that little warder. I should not care to be that unfortunate criminal if he ever came under his jurisdiction.

Two prisoners are talking. "What, Jim, here again?" Yes, "What am I

to do?" "Why don't you try the Army, it is better than this?" Her Majesty's Army, and Her Majesty's Jails, are our chief institutions for the relief of poverty. It is sad, but it is true, no man will enter either till driven frantic by hunger.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROAD TO NEWGATE.

THE BLACK MARIA—MRS. OSBORNE—REVOLUTIONARY SENTIMENTS—TORY JAILBIRDS—THE PHILOSOPHY OF CRIME—WEST END RIOTS—THREE GOLD WATCHES—YOUNG PICKPOCKETS—THE CRIMES OF CIVILIZATION.

I soon found that my jailor had spoken the truth. I had not long to wait. I was committed for trial on Wednesday afternoon, and I left Holloway in the police van about the same time on Friday, en route for Newgate.

A ride in a prison van is not a pleasant experience, but occasionally one hears some very amusing scraps of conversation.

Here is a specimen. One female prisoner to another, "I don't call it fair, do you, to treat them better than us?" She was referring to wealthy prisoners. "Now there is that Mrs. Osborne, I was in the Infirmary with her, and she had chicken broth, I know that, because she did not eat it all, and I took some of it. I don't call that fair, do you? They don't give us chicken broth. We ought to be served all alike."

Mrs. Osborne, it will be remembered, was the lady who stole her friends jewellery. But where did this female prisoner get these revolutionary sentiments? It was certainly not from the literature supplied in the prison. Neither Socialist nor Radical newspapers are allowed to creep in. There is a list of papers hung up at Holloway, which prisoners are allowed to read. Needless to say "Reynolds" is not among them. They don't admit the "Star," nor anything that may breathe of sedition. The most advanced papers you can get in prison are "Lloyds" or the "Daily Chronicle." It is not surprising that most jailbirds are Tories, when they have any political opinions at all. They are as a rule, profoundly convinced of the necessity of keeping up the present system. For they say, "If there were no rich people to rob, what would become of us?" They are devotees of the turf and the tavern, and their political experiences are confined to times when they are hired by wealthy politicians to break up advanced political meetings. Among these, there are doubtless some men who are conscious rebels against our existing society, but they are not numerous.

I have only heard of one prisoner who expressed a fervent admiration for Socialism.

A young Socialist was in prison, soon after the unemployed riots of '86, when the West End of London was sacked. One day he was alone in his cell, when a prisoner who was sweeping in the corridor of the prison, crept to the spy hole in the door, and whispered through it, "Socialist," "Yes," said the prisoner. "Keep it up old man, I am with you. My heart's in it. Why at South Audley Street, last February, I got three gold watches and a diamond pin. My heart's in it old boy, my heart is in it"

If Socialism only meant gratuitous distribution of gold watches at frequent intervals, instead of the restoration of the land and means of production to the people, the criminals might understand it. But a free society of workers owning land and capital as common property has no attractions for them. It is too Utopian. These men are aristocrats in a humble way. They prefer living by plunder, with its risks, excitement, and dissipation, to any paradise pictured by poet or philosopher.

But as the van jogs on its way to Newgate, I think of another incident in connection with it. One day, as I was riding back from Bow Street to Holloway, I noticed a number of lads entering the van. They were nice boys, well behaved and well dressed. They looked like the sons of respectable tradesmen. Surely such lads were too young to go to jail. There was an engaging innocence in their countenances which was quite charming. But going to jail they were, for all along the road to Pentonville, they kept singing out, "Cheer up. It is only three months, it will soon be over."

Next time I was at Bow Street, I asked a detective who those nice boys were. He laughed, and said, "Young pick-pockets." "But they are well dressed. Yes, but they only operate in the best society." "It seems hereditary," he added. "The trade descends from father to son." I was astounded. Youth and innocence in that line of business.

The face of one of the lads was so child-like and innocent, that I was forcibly reminded of the words of Flash Toby Crackit, concerning Oliver Twist, "What a boy that would be for the old-ladies' pockets in church." But are these lads really responsible for their acts, the sons of thieves, brought up and educated under every influence and circumstance that can make them thieves, can they help being what they are? But what of the wise, just, and merciful law, that can find no remedy for these victims of a corrupt civilization, save sentences of brutal imprisonment, culminating at last in penal pervitude? Our laws and our prisons manufacture criminals. "Cheer up it will soon be over," the mournful cry of these poor lads, is an indictment of the civilization that makes them criminals, and then tortures them in a "Christian" jail, for the crimes of its own creation. But the Black Maria is now amid the

bustle and roar of the city. We are not far from Newgate. There is a block near the Old Bailey. The van is stationary for a few minutes. Outside in the sunlight there is a street boy whistling, and tapping the wheels with a cane. Then we rumble on, the door is thrown open, the steps let down, and in single file we enter Newgate.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GATES OF HELL

"GIVE UP ALL HOPE, YE WHO ENTER HERE."—NEWGATE IN THE OLDEN TIME.—"THE IRON CAGE."—"THE PRISON CHAPLAIN."—THE MAN WITH TWO WIVES.—A BOY CRIMINAL.—THE WILD BEASTS OF THE SLUMS.—A "RESPECTABLE" PRISONER.—THREE JOLLY POSTMEN.—"A BRICK OF A JUDGE."

There can be no doubt that there is no prison strikes so much terror, to the heart of the beginner in crime, as Newgate. Holloway has a certain suburban charm, it has been a debtor's prison, and its battlement, and lofty towers, give it an air of State and respectability. This is even felt in the neighbourhood. As a rule, no one will live close to a prison but the poor and disreputable; but Holloway is surrounded by suburban villas and pretty gardens, that give it an air of almost rural charm. But when you enter Newgate, through walls built of huge masses of stone, you feel indeed, that hope has fled, and you think of the thousands of criminals who have passed through these frowning walls, on their way to the convict prison or the gallows.

The cells in Newgate are extremely dark, especially those upon the ground floor, they are furnished in the old style, which prevailed before Sir Richard Cross introduced his Prisons Bill. There is no plank bed, but a hammock is slung from iron rings in the walls. Near the window, stands what looks like an ancient urn, turned into a wash stand. On top stands a basin and jug, but lift them up, and take up the lid that forms the top of the urn, and their arises an evil smell. The ancient urn is a water closet.

Hammocks are very comfortable to those that are used to them. An old jail bird will curl himself up in one comfortably, and sleep the sleep of the just. To a beginner it is not so pleasant. He is apt when he has slung his hammock, and rolls into it, to precipitate himself on one side, when "over goes the show," and he fall bump on the floor. This gives a slight shock to his nervous system and makes him lively. I, however, had slept in a hammock years ago, and I found it a most comfortable bed, while the plank, even when mitigated by a mattress stuffed with oakum, is rough and hard.

Newgate is an old prison, the oldest in London. There are parts of it, including the chapel, that were standing in the days of Jack Sheppard. But

the portion where we were confined is more modern, and is built in the style that prevails through all prisons. A lofty hall like a cathedral, with airy galleries running round. Newgate is only used now, during the sessions, for prisoners who are to be tried at the Old Bailey. I had postponed writing my defence, till I arrived at Newgate, but I found it, owing to the darkness of the cell, a difficult job. If I wrote on my table, which was merely a wooden ledge built in the wall beside the door, I could not see plainly. If the gas jet over the table was lit, the glare made my head ache, but the defence was written though the writing was awful. I was informed by a prisoner that the warder was in the habit of reading my defence every day, when I was out at exercise. I don't know how true this is, but if that warder did try to read it, I felt sorry for him. If it was a duty imposed upon him by the authorities I fear he did not perform it properly, for the manuscript was so illegible I could hardly read it myself.

The prison used to be a very free and easy place in the good old days, when all the pleasures of life, except liberty, could be had for a consideration within its walls. There is still an air of the old reckless profusion about it now. A prisoner's friends will generally manage to provide him with food during the few days he passes in Newgate. And as there is meat with most meals, the jail has the air of a jovial place with a continual feast going on. There is always a look of dinner time about it. All seem to feel in Newgate that the pleasures of life are transitory, and therefore they make the best of them the few days they last. Before the next week there will be a swift deliverance, or oakum, brown bread, and skilly, will be all that is left to us.

We went to chapel on Sunday, it is an ancient building that reminds one of the days of Hogarth. There are two cages, one on each side of the building, into which the prisoners are marched, the gates of the cages are locked, and we grin, across the intervening space, at each other like wild beasts in a menagerie. This is a relic of the days when the criminals in Newgate were really "dangerous," and sentries, with loaded carbines, were sometimes necessary to keep them from mutiny.

As I sat in that old chapel and looked across, I thought how many prisoners had sat within those walls. Yonder, where that dark, thick-set man is sitting, with a white neckcloth swathed round his neck, Thistlewood and his companions once sat awaiting trial and execution. What visions float before your eyes in this sad place. The ghosts of old murderers, dashing highwaymen like Turpin and Shepard, Jacobite conspirators, Radical reformers, Botany Bay convicts. If they could all live again the place would be full of ghosts, and the living crowded out by the dead. If there is a place that might breed phantoms, it is Newgate. At night the stillness of the jail is awful. I went to bed early

after supper, at 5.30 p.m., for writing for an hour or two in the glare of the prison gas was enough. And I only had an elementary book on chemistry from the library to read. A little after eight I would hear the clash of bolts, and then then the sound of the falling footsteps of an old man, thud, thud, of a heavy stick, and what sounded like the pattering of the feet of a dog. A few words would be interchanged between him and the warder who had been left on duty when the others left the jail at six. The young man goes, and the old remains alone. Then would come a rustling sound, and the creep of stealthy feet, then pit pat, pit pat, came the dog's feet. The rustling noise went on, the feet ascended the stairs. I could hear them in the gallery overhead, passing from cell to cell. Then they came down stairs, nearer and nearer. They are coming to my cell. They halt at the door and I catch a glimpse of a human eye at the spy hole, the gas goes down.—— But the door does not open and a spectral visitant from the other world stalk in. It is only the old warder going his round in list slippers, to see if his "birds" are all right. If any place is haunted Newgate ought to be, but it is not, for I saw no ghosts while I was there.

The young warder who looked after me in Newgate was a very pleasant fellow. He and a venerable old man at Holloway were among the best of their class. Both were good natured. The young man had a stock joke when he came to the cell and presented me with a newspaper. He always said, "It aint the 'Commonweal'." One day it was the "Commonweal," but the young man knew nothing about it. There are many ingenious ways of getting papers into jails unknown to warders.

The chaplain at Newgate was a mild, apologetic individual, with a mincing voice and style. He came into my cell on the Saturday, as if he was surprised to find me there. "I was not on his list," he said. "No, I had no religion," I replied. He did not go into doctrinal points, but gave me a little information about the procedure at my trial. I told him "I intended to defend myself." "Well, you will have fair play," he said, "the trials were fair at the Central Criminal Court. And he had known men who defended themselves "to get off. He remembered the case of a man accused of a most shocking "charge persuading a judge and jury of his innocence. He hoped I would be "equally fortunate." And with "Good day, friend," he left the cell. This was the last I saw of the chaplain, till the day of my trial, when as I was declaiming my defence, I saw him in a remote corner of the bench fast asleep, like a little drowsy Hindoo god. He was more fortunate than I, for I had not succeeded in sleeping through his sermon on the previous Sunday.

On Monday the Sessions began, and I was warned by friends, that my case would probably come on on Wednesday. On Wednesday I was taken from

my cell and marched through store yards and corridors to dark passage lit with flaring gas beneath the Central Criminal Court. Here I was locked up in a cell perfectly dark, behind an iron grating, with three others. One was a young Frenchman, a waiter, who had fired a revolver at a companion in a fit of passion. While the next, a stont, simple looking man, informed me he was locked up for "Killing his kid." I looked at him in surprise, for a man more unlike a murderer it would be hard to imagine. Then he told me his story: "Look here I am a married man, only me and my old woman has no kids. I picks up with another woman, and we has a boy. Well I persuades my old woman to adopt this blooming kid, but she not know it was mine. One night I comes 'ome screwed, falls on the bed where the kid was asleep, and smothers it, and here I am. Look here, do you think I shall get off? Both my missus and t'other woman has given me best of characters. T'other one says she does not know what she would have done without me."

This delicious story was told with a charming simplicity, as if the narrator had no idea there was anything "immoral" about it. He was a mechanic, earning good wages, and could afford the luxury of two wives. Why should he not have them? He was sorry for the poor little fellow's death, which was evidently quite an accident, and so the Judge thought, for he was acquitted after a brief hearing. The French waiter also got off, the shot from the revolver had done no harm, and he evidently had no intent to kill.

But there was another with us in the cell, a boy, a mere child, stunted, almost deformed, with the face of a wicked old man, a face on which a long line of evil ancestors, bred amid squalor and degradation, had left their mark. What had this boy done? It was horrible, sickening to think of, he had outraged a young child, little more than a baby, "His uncle had made him drunk," he said, in excuse. Then with that sense of injustice that all criminals feel when punished for crimes, the result of environment and heredity, he began to exclaim upon the cruelty of his judge and jailors. "How would they like to be shut up all alone in a cell by themselves and left to think?" he said. This poor lad seemed to think nothing of the frightful deed he had committed. When his jailors asked him what he was in for, he laughed and jested, as if it was a good joke. What shall we say of a civilization that breeds monsters like these? The thunder of Ravachols dynamite was then ringing through Europe, as a warning of what is to come from this child, and thousands like him, the "wild beasts" bred in the shams.

I am alone in the cell, my companions have gone to the court above to meet their trial. I gaze through the iron bars upon the gas lit passage, there is another cage in the opposite wall, in it there is a man, alone. His eyes and

part of his face are bound up in a black silk handkerchief. He is well dressed, but there is something horrible in the bestial mouth and the brutal chin. He is talking to a warder who treats him with great deference and calls him "Sir."

The boy comes back again led by two warders, one of them is about to unlock the grate of the opposite cell. When the other touches him on the arm "Stop for God's sake" he cries. "Don't lock the boy in with him."

Who was this man of good society, whose presence was contamination to this child of the slums, bred in evil from birth? Wild stories of vices, that brought fire from heaven on older civilizations, when the poor starve in abject penury, while the rich spent their ill-gotten wealth, wrung from their misery in crimes at which the world still shudders—rise before my mind. The air is hot and fetid. I can feel the breath of the volcano, this is not a prison, this strange underworld, it is the gate of hell. Here while the revellers dance over our head, the storm is gathering underground, that shall wreck all. The old world needs a destroyer, and its end is near.

The rustle of women's skirts, a wardress passes with a woman prisoner. The boy arrives back again. "A dozen strokes with the birch. Will it hurt much?" he cries, and laughs in the warders' face. "You'll see" says that official grimly.

Low laughter, three young postmen with a warder. "Well I call that a brick of a judge," says one. "Just fancy only three months." The warder unlocks my grate "Come on" he says "back to your cell. Your case is postponed till Friday." "Just think," exclaimed another, "the judge said our character was so good that he would not give us more. It is prime I call it." Yes, "I thought I should have got more over them postal orders," said another. "Now boys" said the warder, who was also in a high good humour. "Do you know where you are? This is the place where we bury the people that are hung. Do you see that P., that is where Mrs. Pearcy lies. See F.L. that's the Flowery Land Pirates." We were in the Golgotha of Newgate, a narrow passage, between two high walls of massive stone covered with initials of the dead.

The noisy talk ceases for a moment, and then goes on again. As the door of my cell clashes behind, I hear still the voice of the young postmen—"Just fancy! Why, I could do it on my head. Only three months. Why, I shall be out again next August Bank Holiday. Why, he is a brick of a judge. That is what I call him."

CHAPTER VIII.

At the CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT.

A STATE TRIAL—A LEARNED JUDGE—POLICE PERJURY—LYING, A FINE ART—THE TRUTH MADE MANIFEST—THE ATTORNEY GENERAL UPSET—WHIPPED CURS—AN AMERICAN STORY—EIGHTEEN MONTHS HARD LABOUR

It is Friday, May 6th, and I stand side by side with Mowbray in the dock at the Old Bailey. I was not aware till to day I was such an important person. but I am to have a State Trial. The Attorney General conducts the prosecution and the Lord Chief Justice, the foremost lawyer in England, presides over the proceedings. Lord Coleridge is a little harmless looking old man, rather feminine in appearance, but with a silvery voice, and most polite in his manner. The Attorney General strives to give one the impression that he does not like his job, and would rather not have it, but only a strong sense of public duty, etc. He is very careful though to give every point that will tell against us with the jury.

The Lord Chief Justice calls me "Mr. Nicoll," and talks across the court, as if he was speaking to me at his own dinner table. He is quite kind and fatherly in his manner. He commends us for the way in which we have defended ourselves, and does his best to give one the impression that we shall be dismissed with a caution. Some lawyers are like cats that caress mice with their velvet paws before using teeth and talons. But cats are not the friends of mice for all that.

The jury are a set of stolid British block heads, tradesmen to a man, a common sort of jury, with a fixed idea that Socialists and Anarchists are a set of thieves, who want to get at their tills. "And that sort of thing must be put down Sir. Don't we pay rates and taxes for judges, policemen, and jailors, to put it down. Find 'em guilty? I should think so. I would hang 'em every one sir, if I had my way." That's the kind of jury.

Still these men have their domestic affections, and it was their feeling, that it was not quite right to rob motherless children of their father that Mowbray's acquittal was due. No thanks to Lord Chief Justice, whose "leniency" was praised by some of the press, who did his best to persuade them to bring Mowbray in "guilty," because violent articles had appeared in the "Commonweal" before the famous one, and therefore, Mowbray must have known the character of the paper. I did not think much of Coleridge's "leniency." I am sure we should have been no worse off with Edlin or Grantham, whose bark is worse than their bite. But Coleridge was a Liberal. The Government showed good sense in selecting him, the Radical press could not attack him, they were bound by party ties to speak in praise of him, yet the Government knew I was sure of a heavy sentence, for Coleridge was the judge, who had passed a brutal sentence upon Most, for rejoicing in the death of a crowned tyrant.

The proceedings were rather dull, till the arrival of the police witnesses, who swore to the "incitement to murder" in Hyde Park. Sweeney started swearing his way through a brick wall, by stating he was in Hyde Park, among the crowd, when he heard me make the following statement: "Four men are responsible for the conviction of our comrades, Hangman Hawkins, the Jesuitical Home Secretary Matthews, the Spy Melville, and Coulon. Within a week two of them must die. What must our comrades feel when they meet Butcher Hawkins, or Hangman Hawkins, as he is better known, walking about in the streets?" I cross-examined these two unimpeachable witnesses, Sweeney and

Powell. Although both swore positively that these were the very words used, yet it turned out that neither could write shorthand, and that Sweeney had made a note half an hour after the speech was delivered, and Powell an hour afterwards. Yet these versions of the speech agreed exactly word for word; it was wonderful! "You will swear those were exact words I used," I said to the virtuous Powell. "O yes, I'll swear it," he said cheerfully. But you and your friends version of my speech agree word for word, I suppose you have not talked your evidence over together?" "Oh no," with an air of indignation at being asked such a question.

"Why did you not make a note of the speech at once, instead of delaying for an hour?" "I thought I should be in danger from the crowd."

Considering the crowd was largely composed of Sweeney's comrades, I fail to see where the danger came in. But another aspect was put on the case when Mr. Joseph Burgess, editor of the "Workman's Times," with several friends present at the meeting, and two reporters, stepped into the box, and swore positively, that the words that the police had sworn to had never been uttered.

"We must have these witnesses back again," said Lord Chief Justice. The Attorney General was taken by surprise, he had evidently not expected this though if he had been a reader of the democratic press, he might have seen a letter in the "Daily Chronicle," signed by Joseph Burgess, Dr. Watt of Hovingham, and Messrs. Holding and Knypers, stating that I had not incited to the murder of Hawkins & Co. in the Park. The Attorney General complained this evidence had been sprung upon him without notice. The witnesses were recalled, and a nice mess they made of it. The Attorney General obtained permission to ask them whether I had not delivered two speeches, they replied "Yes." Coleridge then wanted to know how it was, that up till now they had only mentioned one speech. "I delivered two," said Sweeney, "and the second was a repetition of the first." It further appeared the two speeches were delivered an hour apart, and the notes were taken half an hour after the last one. "Why did you," said Lord Chief Justice, "say I heard him make a speech and took a note of it?" My Lord, I took a general note," said the unhappy Sweeney, who looked as jolly as a cat on hot bricks. "A general note," said Coleridge sternly, "you had better stand down."

Powell was worse than Sweeney. He took his note an hour after the last speech was delivered, and therefore two hours after the first one. Powell, however, enabled me to ascertain an hitherto unknown fact in natural history, a detective can blush, his face was as red as fire as he stood in the witness box, and he stammered and hesitated like a child detected in some petty theft. He had also only mentioned one speech being delivered and now there were two. "What do you mean by this," said the Judge. "I mean in the sense, my Lord," said Powell. "The sense," said the Judge. "My Lord," said I, "this is clearly a case of perjury on the part of the police, a deliberate attempt to improve upon the evidence."

The two detectives then slunk out of court, like a couple of whipped curs. Mr. Burgess and his friends had only heard the first speech, but Mr. Arthur Fox, a member of the Shop Assistants' Union, had heard both speeches and he proved that that the second speech was merely an appeal for a collection for the wives of the imprisoned men, and the announcement of literature for sale. Fox happened to mention that he had heard me speak before. "O you have heard him speak before," said the Attorney General. "What are you, Mr. Fox?" "I am a shop assistant, sir," said Fox. "Oh, and where have you heard him speak?" "At Shop Assistants' meetings," said Fox. "Shop Assistants' meetings, eh?" said the Judge, "there is not much in that." There was though, for Hailes' manager, and an Inspector

of Police, who were in court to prove that I "intimidated" Mr. Haile, a respectable tradesman in the Hawson-rd, by recommending the public not to shop with him, because he would not close at five on Thursdays, were hastily withdrawn. This evidence might have induced the Judge to take a lenient view of the case.

After the break down of the police evidence, I delivered my speech—which may be read in "Anarchy at the Bar," so I will only quote one passage here. "The sight of those wretched lads in prison, condemned to crime from early boyhood, had stirred strange thoughts within me, and I spoke out to the respectable audience, who listened as if I were some strange monster upheaved from depths below. The police and the prosecution hint that we are dangerous conspirators. Where is their evidence? They have none! They have not produced a scrap of evidence. But we have used strong language! But anyone who has seen as much of the poverty and misery of the poor of the East End as we have, and would not use strong language, would be absolutely heartless.

"You talk of morality, virtue, and religion. What do these mean to thousands of families, who by toiling from week to week, can only make a miserable wage, barely sufficient for existence? What do these mean, to these, who can only afford to live, father, mother, and children, seven or eight persons in one wretched place where you would not put your horses, your dogs, or even your swine? Do you wonder if children, brought up under these terrible conditions go to the bad—the boys become petty thieves, and the girls drift upon the streets? And then what remedy can your society find for the crimes of its own creation? It can send its victims to prison."

"Ravachol? Why your civilization that drives the poor into misery and degradation, that drives women to prostitution, and men to crime, by enslaving and sweating them, to pile up wealth for the rich—is breeding Ravachols by thousands! Breeding them in its fever dens, breeding them in its slums, where good dies, and where only vice and crime can flourish. Ravachol! Your civilization is only fit for Ravachol. And to Ravachol we leave it. Let the monsters you have created devour you!"

The jury did not like this speech. And when Mowbray's Counsel Mr. Grain, said something about its "eloquence." They shook their heads with meaning. The judge summed up? and the jury found me guilty, not only for the article, but also for the speech in Hyde Park! And this, despite the fact that Coleridge told them "it was very doubtful if I had used the violent language attributed to me by the police." Mowbray was acquitted.

It was during the last few weeks of my stay in Chelmsford Jail when the Chief Warder entered my cell. He looked at the card on which my "crime" was recorded. It had been written in lead pencil, not ink, and had been rubbed out, so it appeared that I was in prison for nothing at all. "What are you here for?" said the chief? "Incitement to murder," was my reply. "No what's a nice thing, isn't it? Haven't other people as much right to their lives as you have?" "The question is, if it was incitement to murder," was my answer. "You had a jury, hadn't you?" said the Chief Warder. "O yes I had a jury." The Chief Warder did not understand sarcasm. He uttered a grunt, and walked out.

Lord Coleridge was kind, very kind. He put me in mind of a judge I heard of once in America. A little boy stood before him, convicted of stealing apples. The judge looked at him through his spectacles, benevolently, and began "My poor boy." "He's only going to give us six weeks," said the culprit. "I feel very sorry for you." "It's only a month this time," said the lad. "When I think of the grief you have brought upon a once happy home, the sorrow of your father, the tears of your mother, and the sobs of your little brothers and sisters." "He is going to let us off altogether," said the boy.